1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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but others perform the rites at less distant streams. The fact that the southern Santal often journey northward to the Damodar for funerary purposes suggests that many of them might have come from this region southward, bringing the tradition of the sacred Damodar with them. It is possible that this voyaging is either the result of recent contact with the northern Santal or consultation with the ethnographic literature about them; however, this seems unlikely since there is no particular reason why they should have chosen to borrow such an inconvenient practice from their northern co-tribals. Formerly the southern Santal deposited certain bones of the deceased at the river after performing various rites at some Hindu cremation grounds on the bank of the river. Today, a few coins are deposited in lieu of bones.*

Before the voyage to the river, members of the local lineage, together with their wives and other affinal relatives and fellow villagers of the deceased, join in rites performed within the deceased's village. However, the local lineage is responsible for supplying to the spirit of the deceased the offerings which must be accepted by his spirit as manifested in a medium. The considerable cost involved in supplying these offerings is not totally lost, since the local lineage customarily sells these offerings after returning from the river. The arrangements for this procedure represent a compromise which reveals the antagonism between solidarity and the higgling and haggling of the market. It is required that the items offered be exchanged at far less than their cost, that there be no bargaining, and that members of the local lineage, and in principle even fellow clan

* For a relatively complete account of funerary rites, see Culshaw 1949: Chap. 12.

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613 764 769 members, may not purchase them. Thus there is a proper sacrifice, haggling is not allowed to sully the offering, and still all is not totally lost.

Several deaths may accumulate within a lineage before the collection of offerings and voyage to the river are accomplished, and within this period the local lineage may not enter into marriage alliances or carry on "field worship." It is a question of ridding the local lineage of pollution so that the members may re-enter the social life of the community. Voyages to the river are performed during several prescribed periods of the year, and members of several lineages living within a region may journey there together, especially if it is a long voyage to the Damodar.

761 The eminently social nature of death, for both the deceased and the living, and its interconnection with marriage, lineage solidarity, and social identity are recognized implicitly by the Santal. Thus their very great fear of living exclusively among non-Santal is often expressed by saying, "If we live among others, who will there be to bury us?"

613 574 Besides ritual ties, the local lineage, though by no means economically corporate, is a source of mutual aid. To deny food and lodging to members of one's local lineage, while not strictly speaking unthinkable, would be the greatest of social offenses, and if adequate food and lodging are available, something that no sane Santal would contemplate. Indeed, in the absence of shortage—and sometimes even then—to provide generous hospitality to all Santal, i.e., all "kinsmen" (*peṛa hoṛ*) in the most extended sense, is a cause for joy. Generally, when "kinsmen" visit, the man of the house will meet them and cry out to his wife that "kinsmen" have come; the wife brings water, oil (which she rubs on their tired feet), and rice beer if there is

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596 seven) were extended in the sense of consisting of an undivided family of three generations with pooled income. There were also five households in which a mother had moved in with one of her divided married sons. The mere fact that the average life span of the Santal is relatively short and the fact that families generally fracture after the father's death are sufficient to account for the preponderance of the nuclear family.

598 Each economically undivided family has a part of the house set apart for the purpose of worship and sometimes also for the storing of rice and other valuables. A wall extending nearly [192] across the house divides the largest room of the house in two; it is the smaller portion which is set apart, and it is known as the "inner room" (*bhitar*; inside, as in Hindi). On almost all 592 festivals, offerings of rice beer are made here to the patrilineal • 769 ancestors, accompanied by prayers asking that the family be [192] spared sickness (*handi boṅga* = rice beer worship). At this offering the head of the household usually presides, accompanied by one or more male relatives. Offerings may be brought by females of the household if they are not menstruating at the time, but females not of the household may never enter on the grounds that "one never knows their condition." "Rice beer worship," with its offerings to the ancestors, is obviously expressive of the bonds within the extended family, but *Maraṅ Buru*, the tribal deity, also receives his offering during ancestor worship, expressing the unity of the tribe.

556 Aside from the interconnected strands of kinship and territory, there is another socially relevant characteristic—wealth. As a social marker, like the inheritance of tribal offices, it provides social positions not attainable by all in the normal life process. Much will be said of its divisive effects later; it is [581] appropriate to note here that it operates in establishing mar-

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177 The former, who had no land in his native village, frequently
178 told me that for him Daredih was his village; the latter, by
184 virtue of his position, of which he is extremely proud, is re-
796 quired to attend rites, and no doubt his status makes the *bustee*
621 and its deities more his own than would otherwise be the case. The others, who have neither agricultural land nor position in Daredih, feel that it is not their village, that the local gods are not quite their gods, that the priest is not quite their priest, and that the founder of the village is not the founder of their village. This lack of commitment is reflected in both the attenuation of and non-participation in the various ceremonies of *Baha*. The Santal themselves say, "Here all are workers so we don't worship so much," or simply, "Here we don't worship so much."

[769] This interpretation rather than secularization is supported by the observation that ancestor worship is generally practiced even by those who do not attend the community rites performed by the priest; in ancestor worship it is, of course, one's own ancestors who receive the offering. The failure to dance before the priest's house and the failure to provide him with a dancing procession to and from the Sacred Grove are indications that he is not quite their priest; the same explanation accounts for their frequent failure to contribute to the sacrifices on behalf of the *bustee*. Indeed, the Santal themselves regard all of these acts as signs of respect to the village leaders, and as already indicated, the priest often complains on this score.

Nor can all these acts, which both express and serve to weaken the solidarity of Daredih, be entirely due to the time [793] demands of industrial employment. The priest is himself an industrial worker, as are many of his patrilineal relatives who live in Daredih, and they are regular participants. Also, the

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369 There are a few observations concerning ceremonial practice
796 which apply to all the city Santal (excluding, of course, those
[822] who live in town *bustees*). We have seen that the city Santal
778 are not even a community to the degree that the *bustee* Santal
[793] are; they do not, for the most part, live side-by-side, they have no headman or priest and they have no Sacred Grove in which to assemble for community worship. The practice of community worship is ruled out for lack of physical facilities, but as we have seen from our examination of the *bustee*, there is little reason to think that their presence would be sufficient to maintain ceremonial practice and participation at the level obtained in rural villages.

342 What is most striking about the city Santal is that they do
369 not practice ancestor worship in their Company houses. Their
• 769 explanation of this, with a little elaboration, appears to me to be an adequate one. They say, "Who knows whose houses these were before we got here—they are not our houses. That
[192] is why we do not worship here." It will be recalled that ancestor worship is performed behind a wall dividing off a portion of the main room of the house and known as "inside" (*bhitar*; Santali and Hindi = "inside"). The same word is used to refer to secret rites and deities of a family and of a local lineage, i.e., when a question touches on such things they will say you are asking an "inside" question. It will also be recalled that this "inside" portion of the house must be guarded against pollution by menstruating women. Since it is not permissible to erect such a wall within a company house, again physical facilities in the city render traditional practice difficult. But more than the particular difficulty of lack of a wall, there is a
[783] general question of pollution. Not only does the company house not provide a proper sanctuary for the "inside" rites of

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783 the local lineage, but it is filled with the pollution of some unknown *Diku* caste.

Another obstacle to worship that the city Santal encounter is
273 that it is illegal to brew rice beer in the city. This restriction
369 is also cited by the city Santal as a reason why they do not
769 practice ancestor worship. On several occasions the police have interfered with its manufacture in town *bustees.*

177 Were the city Santal able to live side by side in a single sec-
327 tion of the city and to build their own houses, they might at
369 least attain the solidarity of the *bustee* communities. But the
362 policy of alloting houses follows the universalistic principles which TISCO has deliberately fostered. Houses are assigned according to rank in the factory hierarchy and seniority, with personal preference a minor consideration. Thus, the Santal and other ethnic groups are generally dispersed. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that most of those Santal who have chosen to live in Company houses are relatively well educated and highly acculturated; nor is it surprising that the lack of a Santal community in the city is contributing markedly to the Hinduization of the Santal children living there.

121 Migration to industrial employment has acted as a socio-
182 cultural solvent significantly affecting marriage and ceremonial
464 patterns. Weber's notion of its importance is borne out, but in the cases examined it does not appear to be "the mere fact of living in quite different surroundings" which accounts for its significance. Here its effect seems largely due to its tendency to disrupt traditional social bonds. In the absence of such disruption, as in the case of the natives of Daredih, it seems that traditional practices evolved in a context far removed from urban-industrial conditions are surprisingly viable. These findings support Nash's contentions about the importance of mi-

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TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF SANTAL RETURNED AS HINDU
(Census of India 1931)*

	1901	1911	1921	1931
Orissa	44	46	43	48
Chota Nagpur Feudatory States (Seraikela, Kharswan)		0	18	48
Singhbhum	16	3	56	23

tion of villages which follow distinctively Hindu religious practices. I have heard of only one Santal village within the territory occupied by the southern Santal which has abandoned traditional forms of worship and become thoroughly Hinduized. In 1916 Roy reported the conversion to Hinduism of a number of Santal in a Hindu village in Orissa; they were served by an outcast Brahman priest.[1] I met only one Santal who had taken up Hindu religious practices, and he lived in the city of Jamshedpur. Nowhere that I went were Santal served by Brahmans, though in some areas Santal families are occasionally visited by members of the Potkar caste, who bring messages from the dead for a fee. The Santal also employ females of various low Hindu castes to deliver their children and sometimes patronize Hindu practitioners of traditional medicine (*Kubraj*; Hindi).

It is true that until recently the Santal in large numbers took part, in their own way, in various Hindu festivals. At many of the major Hindu festivals the Santal would assemble for mixed dancing, and some would become possessed and speak

* More recent census figures do not contain this information because "caste has been abolished" as a legal entity.

[1] Roy, 1916.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

The Jog Mañjhi then says to the best-man: Please shave the bridegroom; and he does this. For shaving he gets two half-seers of flattened rice, two half-seers of rice, salt, and tobacco. Thereupon they take the bridegroom to the water in the marriage-shed. And they bring out two yokes and find a sword. They make the bridegroom sit down on the two yokes and make his father stand in front of him, holding the sword resting on his head. The Jog Mañjhi pours water with a loṭa from the omen-pot on the sword, and the water drips down on the head of the bridegroom, who is sitting behind his father's back. Thereafter they take the sword away, and the conductress of ceremonies bathes the bridegroom with the water of the omen-pot. 585

Now the bridegroom's party make themselves ready; they take food and drink beer in the bridegroom's home. While they are eating and drinking the anointing girls anoint the bridegroom, put necklaces and a solid neck-ornament on him and also apply eye-paint to his eyes. At this time they sing (in corrupt Bihari): [539]

How far away, how far away is the house of my bride's father?
How far away is the house of my father-in-law?
From here is the Ganges river, from there is the Jabo river,
Between these two, my boy, is the house of thy bride's father.

The oil and turmeric not spent in anointing they give into the marriage-broker's charge. The Jog Mañjhi now says to the bridegroom's parents: Please bring out the cloths for the bride, the red and white striped cloths, the cloths for the bride's grandmothers, the (turban) cloth for the bride's youngest brother, sindur for the bride's parents, oil for the bride's parents, Neem, ricinus leaves, and a little husks. They bring these things out to him, and he arranges them in a flat basket, and giving it into the marriage-broker's charge he says to him: Here are your things, see. [292]

Next the best-man asks for five Sal-leaves, a small packet of sindur, and one handful sun-dried rice. They give him this, and he ties it up in his clothes. Thereupon the best-man puts a turban on the bridegroom, and the bridegroom's party all go out. The bridegroom's mother arranges a loṭa with water and molasses in a leaf-cup, and his father ties money up in his clothes. They go to the Mañjhi than. Here they spread out a mat, and the bridegroom's mother sits down on it. She lets the bridegroom sit on her thigh. When he has sat down, she gives her son molasses into his mouth. She washes his mouth and gives him a little water to drink. The bridegroom now takes a rupee into his mouth, and his mother sucks him a little. His mother holds out her hand, and the bridegroom lets the rupee he has taken into his mouth fall out into his mother's hand. This they call sucking money, and this is the mother's right.

The bridegroom, the best-man, the bridegroom's follower, and the anointing girls now bow to the Mañjhi haram (the deceased one), and a small pot of beer, that they have [769]

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

585 [764] brought there, this they also offer to him. The anointing girls now carry the bridegroom on their hip to the end of the village street and set him down there, and from there they return home. The marriage-broker conducts the bridegroom's party to the bride's home, carrying a [534] kettle-drum along. Nowadays they go taking with them big drums, trumpets, horns, tubas, [178] cornets, palanquins, rockets, catherine-wheels, bombs, guns, and so on, that is to say, wealthy people do this; but such things were not used formerly, and we did not employ Doms to drum.

When the bridegroom's party reach the bride's village, they call a halt at the entrance to the village street. The marriage-broker goes to the bride's home and says to them: We have arrived; if there is anything you have not got ready, finish it quickly. They answer him: We [302] are ready. The Jog Mañjhi now at once sends the Goḍet to summon the village people. They come there; they anoint themselves with oil and turmeric, beer they also drink, and all married women apply sindur[26] to themselves, but not spinsters, divorced ones, or widows.

Now the Jog Mañjhi makes the Goḍet carry a vessel with water on his shoulder, and he himself carries a loṭa with water, standing on a leaf-plate, kept on the palm of his hand turned upwards; they both go to the bridegroom's party, who have been dancing in the meantime. Seeing the Jog Mañjhi they stop. The Jog Mañjhi and the Goḍet say: Please, friends, drink water. The Jog Mañjhi hands the loṭa with water to the bridegroom's party; they receive it with both hands; thereupon they salute each other, and the bridegroom's party drink.

Thereupon the bride's mother, carrying on the up-turned palm of her hand a loṭa with water and a leaf-cup with molasses standing on a brass-plate, conducts the bride's party and the anointing girls on the bride's side and the women of the village to the end of the village street to meet the bridegroom with water. When they have reached there, she says to the marriage-broker: Bring the bridegroom here, we shall give them molasses to eat and water to drink. When the bridegroom's party and the bride's party have greeted each other and thus become one party, they dance. The marriage-broker says to the bride's mother: Look here, this one is the bridegroom. He salutes his mother-in-law and also a couple of the women. When the other women and the anointing girls see the bridegroom, [539] they sing a number of abusive songs:

To-day, they say, to-day he will come, to-morrow, they say, to-morrow he will come;
How big a wealthy man's son is he, that we must wait until midnight?

Thy mother made friends with a dog,
Thy mother made friends with a cat.
Fie, fie, to a bastard,
My daughter I do not give.[27]

[302]

[26] The sindur, the blood-red vermilion, is applied to the forehead at the parting of the hair, just enough to show that the lady has a husband living. A Hindu custom. [27] These two verses are in a kind of Hindi; the following verses are all in Santali.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

The Jog Mãjhi then gives the anointing girls into their parents' charge, each with one portion food. And then all go to their respective homes. 585

Now the bridegroom's party reach their own village. The marriage-broker makes them stop at the entrance to the village street, and himself goes in advance to the bridegroom's home. He says to them: The bride and the bridegroom have come; come along, we shall meet them with water. The bridegroom's father then brings the headman and his deputy, the Jog Mãjhi and his deputy, and the Godet of the bridegroom's village to his house and gives them two leaf-cups of beer each and says: Listen, headman, come along, the bridal pair has arrived; we shall meet them with water. The headman then says: Well then, Jog Mãjhi, call the young people of the village. The Jog Mãjhi sends the Godet and has them brought. The village headman says to the bridegroom's father: Please have ready one pot of beer in the house. Thereupon the village headman says to the Jog Mãjhi: Do give these young men two leaf-cups of beer each. The bridegroom's father libates a little beer, and the Jog Mãjhi gives some to the young men.

The headman then says to the young men: Take your cloths tightly round your loins and get hold of one pair af dancing drums. He says to the Jog Mãjhi: Please get water in a vessel and one lota. When they have got these things, he says to them: Come along, we shall bring the bride and the bridegroom, the bride's brothers, all of them. Then the young girls and men all go to the bride and the bridegroom at the entrance to the village street. The Jog Mãjhi gives the lota with water to the bride's brothers and after them to the duenna.

Now the bridegroom's mother washes the feet of the bridegroom, the bride, the bride's brothers, and the duenna and gives them molasses and water into their mouths. While this is going on, the women and girls of the village abuse the bride singing. In the same way as the bride's people met the bridegroom with abusive songs, just the same songs, only the name is changed. At this moment the Jog Mãjhi says to the girls: Please take the bride and the bridegroom on your hips. Carrying them along they put them down at every house, and the women of each house wash their feet and put molasses with water into their mouths. When they reach the house of the village headman, the bride and the bridegroom, the bride's brothers, and the duenna make their bow to the dead Mãjhi haram at the Mãjhi than. And the women of the house wash their feet and give them molasses with water into their mouths. Last of all they reach the home of the bridegroom and stop outside in the street. The best-man's wife ties the ends of the bride's and the bridegroom's clothes together. Now the bridegroom's mother on a brass-plate arranges sun-dried rice, sun-dried paddy, dhubi grass, three balls of flour, and three balls of cow-dung, in one large leaf-cup turmeric, in one large leaf-cup oil, one iron wristlet, sindur, and a comb, and she takes this outside into the street. With this brass-plate she performs the waving [769]

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

V. HUSBAND AND WIFE IN THEIR OWN HOME

a. Setting up a household.

When husband and wife have been separated from his parents, they set up a household for themselves. They ask the village headman to get a house-site. They give him beer and food. The husband cuts trees and brings them from the forest; he cuts thatching grass in the forest, or buys it from somewhere. He fixes nine posts in the ground; thereupon he puts up three roof-beams; at three places he fixes double cross-beams, he fixes forty rafters, and in three places, at the top, in the middle, and at the bottom of these, he puts cross-laths. Thereupon he makes the rafter-framework and after this thatches. Then he makes a wattle and daub wall; having done this he puts up something to keep separate the place for the ancestors. The wife then kneads earth and smears this on; afterwards she fills the house inside with earth and plasters all smooth, and she makes a fire-place. The husband makes a door, of wood or of thin bamboo-slips. In the house they have two bedsteads, a wooden mortar and pestle, a winnowing-fan, baskets, brooms, earthenware vessels, big and small, ladles made of wood or of pumpkin-shell, kodali axe, chisel, adze, sickle, knife, plough-beam, yoke, plough and plough-share, flute, bow and arrows, battle-axe, sword and dancing-drum and kettle-drum. Poor people have no battle-axe, sword, dancing-drum, or kettle-drum.

The sacred closet is for the ancestors to stay hidden in. Women belonging to other men are not permitted to go in there; and some people do not permit even their own daughters to go in there, that is, when they have been married. In this closet they make a small enclosure, and this is the real place for the ancestors to stay hidden in. In the closet money is also kept. On the backside of the house they have the homestead field; here they cultivate maize. And in front of the house towards the village street they have the court-yard. This they fence securely in on the four sides. They make two openings for going out and in, one is the homestead field door and one the village street door.

The man builds a shed for the cows and bullocks and buffaloes, a fold for the goats and sheep and a sty for the pigs. The fowls and the cat stay in the house, and the dog stays somewhere on the verandah, to guard the house.

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

224 who shot the deer, him they give the hind half; and of the head they give him one split
[793] piece, of the spleen one split piece and of the liver one split piece. To the village priest
[622] they give the flesh on both sides of the backbone and a part of the liver, to offer to the spirits. For the village headman they take out one thigh as his part of the rump belonging to the killer, the village headman gets the upper part of this; what is below this his deputy gets, and the end of the leg the Godet gets. And the kettle-drum drummer gets for himself a separate part of this. The remaining flesh the hunters divide equally among themselves, and for the men who did not go to hunt, they leave a little flesh, and this they apportion to them, house by house; this portion they call an extra share (capo joro). Of hares and peafowls the village priest has no right to get anything, neither has
[793] the village headman any right, nor have they any right to get an extra portion; of these
[622] only the one who shot gets his share, and the remaining flesh the hunters divide in equal portions among themselves. They who carry get the belly, of deer and of hares. This they call the belly for carrying. Of all kinds of birds the carriers get the gizzard.

The village priest wraps the flesh he is to offer up in a dry leaf and roasts it and offers it to The Five the Six, Pargana haṛam, Māṇjhi haṛam, and Maraṇ buru; having offered it he eats the flesh.

The village headman has, by customary law, to give five half-seers of rice as a hunt bounty; this the hunters cook together with the flesh of the heads into a hash and eat. Thereupon they come to their respective homes with their portions. The shooter's rightful portion and the village headman's portion they carry along; the headman's portion they bring into his house, and the rightful portion of the killer of an animal into his house. They who carry and bring this, get beer and food at both places. In the house of the shooter they separate from his rightful portion the pot-flesh on the underside of the knee. This the sisters and daughters of the shooter get. However far away they may live, the shooter brings this to them and leaves it there, and these treat him to beer and food, and they look upon this as a great honour. His part of the head and the liver the shooter
• [769] cooks with rice into a hash and offers this to the ancestors of his family.

g. Composing songs and the like.

538 Parables they have gradually composed, at different occasions. Taking up what has been seen they have composed these. If a person suddenly speaks and reveals this or that, then others, thinking that this is good and fitting, will also speak the same, and thus it is spread about. Folk-tales and fairy-stories are not composed nowadays, only old ones are in vogue, learnt one after the other. Riddles we have also only old ones. To mimic no
536 one is able to learn, only by having a natural ability people are able to mimic, to show the faults of people. The songs are mostly old ones; still they are now and then com-
533 posing a few new ones. Men have composed riāj, matwar, and marriage songs, and

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g. To neutralize the effect of an eclipse.

821 428 604 593 To neutralize the effect of an eclipse is done as follows. In a year when an eclipse of the sun or the moon is taking place, a mother of children will say: Do, my sons or daughters, go for us to the family of your maternal uncle to neutralize the effect of the eclipse. If they live in the same village, they go that very day to the family of their maternal uncle. When they have reached there, they say: We have come, uncle, to neutralize the effects of the eclipse. They say to them: All right, my boy (or my girl). Now the mother of these children has brewed beer and takes this to her father's house; and they drink this, pouring some out as a libation. If her father is living, he says to her: What is it, my girl, that you have in mind and have brought? If her father is not living, her brothers will also ask her in the same way. She then says: You remember, your nephews or grandchildren came to neutralize the effets of the eclipse; it is in connexion with this that we have come. Now if the old man is alive, he calls all the boys together. If he is not alive, the brothers come together and consult each other. And they give them a fowl or a goat or a sheep or a pig. If these multiply, then only these children have a right to this property because the wives of all the sons fetch this eclipse-neutralizing from their father or brothers. Therefore the heirs on both sides have no right to get anything of the possible increase of these. Only of their own accord the brothers of both sides may give the children a bull- or a heifer calf. They say that formerly, when the cows or the sheep or goats multiplied in the home of a wife's father, and the girl was bringing this live stock from there to her husband's home, then the bongs of her father's home would also come along. Then if this bongs did not return, her husband would have to worship the bongs of the old home of his wife.

[769]

h. About harvest perquisites.

421 562 The harvest perquisites are as follows: When a man's daughter, while unmarried, gets harvest perquisites, her father and brothers will lend her perquisites to somebody at 50 pct. And when these perquisites increase, and from this also cattle multiply, then at the time when her husband brings to his home what has multiplied in the old home of his wife, the bongs of some people will also, it is told, follow together with this property. Therefore some people do not let what they have remain there for a long time, fearing that the bongas will come along. And when anyone marries them, also the brothers of the husband have a right to the harvest perquisites property. But then the father and the brothers of the girl will call out to get a higher brideprice; because they say: We are sending with this our daughter or sister, or: what she owns, half our household. Therefore we shall take a higher brideprice, and of this you will not get anything in return. And when she acquires harvest perquisites after having become a widow or been divorced and this increases, then, in case friends apply for her and she is remarried, this woman alone has

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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stock, to the chief presiding deity, *Marañ Buru*, and ancestor-spirits of the family, uttering suitable incantations so that the baby may prosper in life and have no diseases.

The child, if a male one, now receives his name after his grand-father; and if a female, after her grand-mother on the paternal side. Now follows a general drink of rice-beer and a tribal dinner. The midwife, who generally receives a fee of eight annas if the child is a female one, and ten annas and a *baru* (brass-plate) if a male, will now, on her part, invoke *Marañ Buru* and the dead ancestors of the father of the child at the village bathing-ghat, throw the leaf-cup in water, bathe and return home.[1]

Between the third and the fourth year, children of both sexes have their ears bored by their grand-mothers or elderly female relatives by means of a brass-needle. It is a quiet domestic ceremony and no invitations are issued outside.

Caco-Chatiar

The second critical period in the life of the Santal is sought to be guarded by a purificatory ritual called Caco-chatiar. This ceremony may be observed any time before marriage and is in effect, the admission

1 The midwife's fee for the next male child is 8 ans. and 6 ans. for a female.

St Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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585 mutually rub each other's person with oil and turmeric paste, while they offer some vermilion to *Marañ Buru* and the god of water (*Ma Gònga*) with the tips of their fingers. Should the bride be the first to apply the mark, she is deemed to be the future ruling party. Now, the bridegroom is given a brass-pot which he hides in the mud ; the bride tries to find it out, and this intriguing process is repeated thrice. Now, after bath, all return home, when the bride washes the feet of her husband, his elder brother and other superiors.

Idi Agurnaal[1] (*Bride's return to her father's home*)

[169] After two days of the marriage, the couple return to the bride's home, when, the goat, left behind by the bridegroom's party at the time of marriage, is offered to the immediate dead ancestors of the bride. The elders of the village assemble, and the he-goat's meat is now cooked and every body joins the feast. The bridegroom is now presented with cows by his father-in-law, and should this present be delayed, he would hesitate to eat

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[192] 1. "Agurnaal'." The word was so spelt by the educated Santals at Mayurbhanj. A similar word "àguàdar" in Dr. Campbell's *Santali to English Dictionary* means "A forerunner, those who precede a marriage-party to the bride's village", p. 6.

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when at dinner, and would give up his hunger-strike on proper assurances only. 585

Now, it is time for the go-between, *raebaric'*, who accompanied the couple all through, to drop off and the party returns to the bridegroom's home.

2. *Bàriàt Ate Bapla*

A second form of the orthodox marriage is named thus. The only difference from the previous ceremony here is that the bridegroom's party goes to the bride's house with the bridegroom, when they bring the bride over to their own house, where the marriage takes place with all formalities of *Asli* marriage. The uncastrated goat is also taken to the house of the bride where it is offered to her immediate ancestors. [169]

3. *Tuñki Dipil*

Tuñki Dipil, also a variety of *Asli* marriage, is eminently suited to the poor. Here the betrothal party goes with the bride-price (*gònòñ*) to the house of the bride, and brings her to the bridegroom's home, where the marriage is celebrated with all the attendant ceremonies of the orthodox marriage.

In the foregoing pages, we have marked the orthodox systems of Santal marriage, which have, in course of time, adapted themselves to the pre- [177]

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765 (*Simkutam*) and the inmates of the house worship
783 them (*Marañ Buru* and the deceased) with a hotch-
[782] potch, called *Giritora*. The ceremonies now conclude with a tribal feast and drink.

769 Thereafter, some rice and vegetables are kept on leaf-plates and later, deposited in a basket along with a water-pot, as a meal spread for the spirit of the deceased. Next, it is hung from a rafter of the deceased's house. The following morning, the basket is closely inspected ; and, if any food-particles can be seen, it is believed that the deceased has eaten the food and has washed his hands with the water in the pot.

765 *Iiling Dabar (going to the river Damodar with the bones)*

Now the day arrives for carrying the bones of the dead to be consigned to the holy waters of Damodar. The elders with the Headman begin to pour in the deceased person's house. Some prepare
[787] sacks for carrying food-stuff and the bone, while two others fall in a trance (*jhupar*) impersonating again the dead man and *Marañ Buru*, when their wishes are consulted as to the person who will carry the bones. On the reply of the person impersonating the deceased, the man is shown his luggage.
[782] Now three fowls are sacrificed in honour of *Marañ*
[769] *Buru*, the ancestor-spirits and the dead man, the

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heart being reserved for the Chief Presiding Deity (*Marañ Buru*) and the remnants of the sun-dried rice that accompanied the offerings, are carefully preserved to be carried along to Damodar. 765 782 769

Next, the bones previously buried are carried to the cross-road, washed with water and *hàṇḍia rài* (the best part of rice-beer), being rubbed within the folds of a yellow-coloured cloth. The women offer presents of money to the bone, and it is placed inside the sack prepared for the purpose. The empty pot (which contained the bone so long), is now placed on three twigs of *Kendu* tree (called so in Oriya) while the carrier walks round it thrice and then facing east breaks it amidst cries of *Hòribol* by the village-elders. Thereafter, he leaves for his destination being escorted by two men to the *Gadi* (halting place for men going towards Damodar). 769

Bhandan or Final Purification

After the *jañ baba* (the bones of the dead) are deposited in the Damodar river, offerings like the *Pindòs* of the Hindus are prepared with mud, tooth-picks, parched rice and sweet-meats on three *sal*-leaves on an altar, when *Marañ Buru*, the dead ancestors and the deceased are propitiated. 765 769

Now, on the day for *Bhandan*, the relatives and the friends of the family in mourning arrive at the house of the deceased together with the village- 765 783

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elders. The men-folk are shaved and, thereafter, both men and women repair to the *jòl-ghat* (public bath). Coming back, two men again impersonate *Maraṅ Burn* and the deceased, and are offered *bàṇḍia ràsi* (the best part of rice-beer); fowls and goats are sacrificed in their honour in the yard. A meal is prepared with rice and offered inside the house, while the villagers are plied with rice-beer and treated to a feast. The meat of the sacrificed animal is divided in a peculiar way, the villagers being entitled to the upper side when it was felled on the ground, the lower falling to the share of him who provided it.

The ceremonies conclude at Mayurbhanj with *Kandh Bhojani*, when some Santals, impersonating Brahmins and Vaishnavs, are fed by the family, and *Bhandar Bodh*, which requires a barber, similarly acting his part, to be presented with rice and meat showing undoubted influences of Hinduism.

IDEAS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

At this stage, we think it will be instructive to give the reader some idea about the Santal's belief in a life hereafter.

The Heaven (*Serma disom*, lit. sky-country) is situated up in the blue skies. It is also called *Suòròg*. There the gods, *Maraṅ Burn* (the Chief Presiding Deity) and others live. At times they also

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the new corn with a similar prayer. The remainder of the millet, he takes home for himself. 796 793 243 782 [184]

The Millet Festival, called *Muchri*, exists in all its details in Mayurbhanj and is observed by the Santals there.

Gamah Purnima (August)

Side by side with these harvest-festivals, the Santals of Mayurbhanj observe *Gamah Purnima* on the full-moon of *Sravan* (August), when cows are fed with salt, *mohua* flowers, rice, the corrosive *bhela* fruit and a grass called *mutha*, their horns being copiously rubbed with oil. Thereafter, men and women dance round a Karam (*Adina Cordifolia*) branch, planted at the *akhra* (place for dance), a special *Karam* dance, and on the conclusion immerse it in water. Ancestors are also propitiated with offerings of rice-beer. The Santals observe the festival along with some of the Hindus. All wear new clothes and indulge in feasts and drinks, not forgetting to feed Brahmins and Vaishnavas. 796 [535] [769] [171]

Karam Pòròb (September-October)

This is a festival observed in September-October. The males of the village go after nightfall and cut a branch of a *Karam* tree (*Adina Cordifolia*,) which they fix in the village lane (*kulhi*) and round which the young people dance till morning, when the Karam branch is thrown into a tank. 796 [824] [535]

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Baṭèhin hèralòñ
Ḍaṇḍa ka bàsi ho;
Gòṭèhin hèralio
Gàia jo yo re;
Gòṭèhin hèralio
Gàia jo.

The sense of the above folk-song may thus be rendered in English:—

Who has created this world?
Who has created the cattle?
Ṭhàkur (God) has created this world.
Ṭhàkur has created the cattle.
The hawk created Kanu Gowala,
He used to feed cows in the east.
Well, my son! (Kanu) where have you lost your flute which you always keep in your loin?

Kanu replies:—

I have lost my flute in yonder field;
I have lost my cattle in yonder pasture.

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23

Therealter, the Santals take a meal and assemble at the *Jabèrthan*, where one of the most interesting sports is witnessed. The village-elders sit. The cow-boys of the tribe are summoned before them and asked to make their cows walk on a particular spot on which eggs have been placed. The cow-boy, who can make his cow break the egg or even smell it, is called the "Lucky Boy" by the applause

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of the audience. The feet of the successful cow are then ceremonially washed.[1]

The second day is devoted to the preparation of food for the different tribal gods, in whose honour animals like fowls, goats and pigs are sacrificed. Ancestor-spirits are also worshipped and their memory honoured and offerings and libations made to them at home by heads of families. The evening is spent in community feasts on a large scale with drinks of rice-beer offered to the gods and thereafter drunk by the members of the tribe.

The climax of the ceremonials reaches with the worship of cows (*Gohal Puja*). When all are sleeping, young men of the tribe keep vigil and go from place to place to awaken the cows, beginning with the Headman's house, playing on pipes and kettle-drums.

The following is a song sung on the occasion: —

Gàini còlilo siribinda bònè ho,
Màhisini carae gaṅga para jo yo re,
Màhisini carae gaṅga para jo.

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1 E. G. Man, in his *Sonthalia and the Sonthals* (p. 57) in this connection refers to the Egyptian myth of the "Bull and the Egg." The ceremony consists in newly laid hen's eggs being placed on the village lane and oxen driven past, and the one who stoops to smell the egg is held in high estimation for the year. "I believe," says Man, "the Egyptian mythology states that the earth came out of an egg which the bull broke."

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and sweet potatoes must be stolen from the houses of the villagers to be eaten with the Headman's share of rice-beer, and no sin attaches to it as during the *Nòstò Chòndrò* of the Hindus. Such thefts are called *Jagarna* in Mayurbhanj. The object of the custom lies in the Santal belief that those who steal on such occasions will never be prosecuted on charges of theft, nor will such householders thus victimised be robbed by real thieves, a second time.

The second day in Mayurbhanj, is the day for *Sarḍi*, when *Gohal Puja* takes place. In the morning, an interesting dance is executed round a *Karam* branch which is brought by two bachelor youths and planted on the ground, cleansed with cow-dung by the maidens of the tribe. Old women circle round the tree with earthen lamps and offerings of sun-dried rice. This is closely followed by merry dance by the men and women of the tribe, in different groups.

With the noon, people offer fowls and pigs to *Kalimata*, the presiding deity of the cow-shed and to the ancestors ; and then ceremonially wash their agricultural implements as plough-shares and yokes, and anoint them with powdered rice and vermilion. Now it is time for meal, when, the animals sacrificed are eaten at home ; and this over, by evening, one will find the Santals *en masse* near the *akhra* (the village dancing yard) engaged in their songs and

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796 dances round the *Karam* branch. The conclusion
796 of the dance sees a tug-of-war between the youths
526 and maidens of the tribe, for the latter won't allow the branch to be taken away for immersion by the former; and this trial of strength can only be avoided if the lopped branch can be stolen away from the vigilant eyes of the other sex. This tug-of-war is a pure amusement. There is no hidden meaning behind the custom.

796 At midnight, the villagers take a nocturnal
23 round near cow-sheds singing songs with musical accompaniments, with the object of kissing the cattle and thus adoring them.

The third day is devoted to sports with the cattle. Early in the morning the members of the tribe assemble at the house of the Headman with their drums and other musical instruments and make *biras* (a stack of paddy coiled together in a circle) according to the number of cattle in the Headman's cattle-shed and tack them to their horns. They get a bit frightened and are let loose amidst the din of drums, and as they rush out, men shower on them rice-beer and women stone them with eggs. As the cattle run on pell-mell, the last one is caught by an enterprising Santal, and its feet are washed with a good deal of ceremony.

796 Next, a punch is made of the Headman's rice-
273 beer with those of the other cattle-owners, and drunk
769 after offering it to the ancestor-spirits.

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796 the Hindu festival prevalent on the day. This
[769] is also called *Sakrant puja* and performed on an elaborate scale at Mayurbhanj, when *chira* (flattened rice) and molasses are offered to the dead ancestors.

796 On the first day, called "Banundi," people catch
262 fish and crab in the belief that if they can eat them on the day, they will be given a long lease of life. Tasteful cakes of meat, sun-dried rice-flour are prepared in all households ; and after baths, the Santals eat them with treacle and *til* (sesamum),
[273] *chira* (flattened rice) being a compulsory item. Meanwhile, drinks of rice-beer go on.

796 Towards evening, the people indulge in archery
[526] competition on a target placed on a plantain tree. The successful one is cheered by the tribe and conveyed to the Headman's residence with a great demonstration, where the tribe is entertained with rice-beer and fried-rice. He, who can maintain a uniform record for three consecutive years, is awarded a special prize by the Headman, amidst tribal songs and dances.

The conclusion of the festival sees a great deal
[532] of mirth in all the houses. Puppet monkeys made
[574] of straw are made to dance from house to house. People raise subscriptions for a tribal dinner and the country-side rings with merry music and laughter of a good time.

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On the first day called *Um Narka* (purification), the members of the clan clean their houses, wash clothes and eat nothing except rice and *biri* (a pulse). Thereafter, some other goats are also castrated and the place of sacrifice is made clean and a pot of holy water placed there. 796 614 783

On this day the clan offers *pujas* to two gods whose names our informant did not disclose as a clan secret, but added that *Brahma* and *Ganesh* of the Hindus are the nearest equivalent to the deities, who are impersonated by two Santals after falling in a trance. They are solemnly asked their names and on their answer, they are shown a goat and a ram to be offered to them the next day, for their approval. As they express their satisfaction, they are prayed to resume their normal selves. 796 614 787

Before sun-rise on the second day called *Sàrdi*, the clan assembles at the place of sacrifice and offers the goat to the Santal equivalent of *Ganesh* and the ram to *Brahma*. Two ancestors are also invoked with offerings of fowl, the spotted ones being meant for the ancestors on the mother's side, while the red ones for those on the father's side. *Maraṅ Buru* (the chief presiding deity) gets a white fowl. The peculiarity of the sacrifice is that the ram, goat and the white fowl are sacrificed by being killed by one stroke as is done by the Hindus, whereas, the spotted and red fowls are slowly cut. Prayers are 796 614 782 [769]

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776 782 nothing was really found. One Mangla Mañjhi heard about it and it "roused his curiosity and cupidity." He now requisitioned the services of Bhima Naik, a famous exorcist, who decided upon human sacrifice to propitiate the deity guarding the treasure. Next, a lad named Chotrai was decoyed, his head severed, and the blood held in a small earthen pot and offered to the deity.

Basuki or Basumata

Apart from the hill and village spirits mentioned above, the Santals worship *Basuki* or *Basumata* for the welfare of agriculture, during the month of Ashar, with offerings of fowls and goats. Such [731] worships do not form a regular feature of the tribal calendar, but are occasional invocations during apprehended crop-failure.

Ancestor Spirits

769 761 If the idea of death has profoundly puzzled humanity, the Santals are no exception to the rule. In their crude way, they have built up a theory regarding the disembodied spirits which regards the dead ancestors with religious awe and reverence.

769 Thus it is that we see that in all festivals, public or private, *Haṛamko* or *Buṛha-Buṛbi* (the old man

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and woman) are offered a cock and a hen respectively, together with a liberal share of rice-beer. During harvest festivals, like *Sobrae* or the Flower Festival (*Baha*), fowls are sacrificed in their honour with prayers so that the members of the tribe may have no diseases such as bowel-complaints. The reverence paid to the memory of the dead relatives by the Santals will also be amply illustrated by the fact that the departed spirits of the dead brothers and unmarried sisters receive supplementary worship, after the propitiation of *Burha-Burbi*.

Mischievous Spirits

Santals have about a number of mischievous minor spirits, who find a devilish delight in bringing epidemics to men or cattle, unless propitiated with appropriate rituals.

We came across three such representatives in the Santal pantheon, *Kalachandi*, a male spirit, and *Kalamahichandi* and *Nasòn-kudra*, both female evil spirits, as exercising an uncanny influence on the tribe. The offerings that please them are *Ihitipiti* (Oriya, a kind of worm), frogs, grass-hoppers, fowls, human blood, vermilion, sun-dried rice, powdered charcoal and burnt clay from ovens. It is noteworthy that earthen images are made to represent these deities. They are at first invoked in the

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Religion of the Santals

In the foregoing pages we have noticed the various classes of Santal deities. The question now naturally arises if the religious practices of the Santals are not some form of an active worship of some deities and lesser spirits, together with a vague belief in souls and a future existence connoted by the term 'Animism.' One is puzzled to think, as Risley was, as to what is the exact idea of the Santal when he thinks about the spirits, say of the hills. Is it a reverence for the spirit of the flesh? Does he think he is in danger of being ruined by it? Risley says, "No." According to him, when a Santal thinks of a tiger-spirit, he does so from the "vague dread of a mysterious tiger-power or tiger-demon, the essence and archetype of all tigers, whose vengeance no man.....could hope to escape."[1]

But it must be noted, however, that the conception of abstract power in itself independent of a material vehicle, is difficult for the aboriginal mind. Thus, to the Santal, *Thàkur Jiu* or *Dhòròm* is not an abstract conception, but a real entity, with feelings and desires akin to those of man. For his Ancestor Spirits in particular, he exhibits filial devotion which may be likened to the Hindu

1 Risley, *People of India*, page 225.

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worship of the *Pitris*. That is a religion not of undiluted fear in the presence of the mysterious powers of the dark.

The very name of the Supreme Deity connotes a moral order of things. In ancestor-worship, in endearing terms of primary human-relationships as "Basumata," we find something that removes the Santals steps higher than the animists. That emotion and thrill play a conspicuous part in the religious practices of the Santals, cannot for a moment be doubted by the person who has observed them with an eye to see. It may be that they have borrowed these from the Hindus. But even as Pre-Dravidian practices have been digested and assimilated beyond recognition by the Hindus, these ideas, even if borrowed, have been for a long time past, the religious life and blood of the tribe.

So it is that the latest Census reports have given up the term 'Animism' in describing the religion of the Santals, and for want of a better expression we should characterise it as "Spiritism" a term used by Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy, in designating the religion of the Kharias, a Munḍa tribe.

342 ventilation except a few holes high up on the wall. In front of the house the eaves of the roof are elongated which serves as a covered verandah. The floor of the house is a little raised above the ground, being filled up with earth. This is trampled down hard and made smooth with mud mixed with cowdung.

342 Every Santal house in which the head of the
778 family lives has a 'Bhitar'. This is a part of a room
• 769 partitioned by a low wall which runs out from the side wall some six to nine feet into the com-
[609] partment. It is a kind of stall, and is sacred to the ancestors. Here food is kept for the ancestors and no
[784] stranger is permitted inside. The married daughter of the house, who in her girlhood was allowed entry is now not permitted inside, because she now belongs to another family and might cause religious pollution.

343 There is a separate shed for cattle. Within this
231 shed in some houses special arrangement is made to keep pigs. In one corner of the cattle-shed two mud-walls about three feet in height are built, to form a small rectangular sty. Over it bamboo sticks and branches of trees are placed, so that pigs cannot escape by jumping. A hole is made in one of the walls and bamboo sticks are placed there in such a way that by raising these sticks the pigs can easily come out and enter. But in some villages in the Godda Damin are found the pig-sheds built outside the house. In this case the walls of about 5 feet and the roof are made of thatch.

342 Inside the house on the verandah the "Dhenk"[1]
252 (rice-husker) is fixed and a mill-stone is kept. Except
351 during cold season, when the inside is warm, the
[407] Santals generally stay outside on the courtyard both day

[1] [Erratum: this should read "'Dhenki'" . Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

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771 782 796 Thus in religion proper the main attitude of Santal Society towards the supernatural, is one of reverential fear in the presence of certain mysterious supernatural powers and beings and dependence on and propitiation to and prayerful submission to them, and the result expected is the averting of the ill-will and securing the good will of the supernatural beings and good luck to man in crops and cattle, health and progeny.

771 776 778 782 [784] The Santal religion is also not a little concerned with ancestral and certain other disembodied souls and Nature-spirits and deities. The rites employed to establish relations with them are mainly supplications and prayers, offerings of sacrifices and the ceremonial sharing of sacrificial food besides certain special observances and taboos.

771 [754] [796] The Santal believe that the supernatural influence is not often inimical and evil. Their idea is that there is no possibility of malevolent influence being turned to a benevolent or good one, the only practical question for them is how to stop it and, in the case of witches, how to stop and punish it. Bongas and witches know how to do evil to people but more often than not also how to do them good.

771 829 [182] The Santal religion in its social aspect is essentially a tribal matter and has helped to strengthen the social unity and quicken the sense of social responsibility, and his concept of righteousness is bound up with his social or tribal consciousness. As the Santal Society has not yet got much beyond a limited tribal consciousness his conception of righteousness is not concerned with the essential or absolute standard of righteousness of things.

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In that condition they had for the first time experienced sexual intercourse and, realizing their nakedness, they had clothed themselves. He taught them that they must always offer beer to him when they invoked his name.

The Old Lady of the Sacred Grove, *Jaher Budhi*, is by contrast a shadowy person. Bodding reports[1] that her name is said to be *Ram sɛlgi*, but except for the fact that offerings are made to her along with those made to *Maraṅ Burn* at festivals, little is known about her. The same may be said of the "Five and Six", who are thought of as a family of five brothers and one sister. It is only to the "Five" that offerings are made, and hence they are also frequently referred to as the "Five." One sacrifice suffices for them all. The "Five" are greatly feared because they are likely to cause some swift calamity when they are displeased.

The *Mɑ̃jhi than*, the shrine of the spirits of the departed headmen, is the second of the sacred places in which the cult of the tribe is localized. The site is supposed to be fixed in much the same manner as that of the sacred grove. Local legends grow up round these shrines, and they exhibit many variations. Often they are situated somewhere near the centre of the village, to one side of the main street. In some instances the shrine consists of a raised mud platform over which there is a well-kept thatched roof supported on four corner posts and a central upright post about five feet high. In other cases it consists of a cleared space at the foot of a tree, and the roof of thatch is erected only at the times when sacrifices are offered. In some parts each departed headman is commemorated by a small stone which is placed in the shrine at the time of his death ceremonies, but in this area it is not possible to reckon the number of generations since the foundation of a village by the presence or absence of stones. Many of the villages have a history which extends back over more than six generations, and it appears that the stones which may have been placed in the past do not retain their sacredness over so long a period, and they have been removed. At the present time the immediate ancestors and also the original founder, revered as *Mɑ̃jhi haram*, are honoured by setting up the clay effigies of elephants or horses in their names. Even the site may be shifted under the influence of new ideas. Thus in the purely Santal village of Jamedia there is a shrine in the village street not far from the headman's house which has been in its present position for about fifteen years. The villagers referred to it as the *Mɑ̃jhi*

[1] Bodding, *Santali Dictionary*, Vol. III, p. 238.

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jaher rather than as the *Maṅjhi than*. Until recently the shrine had been in another place beyond the present limits of the dwellings, and the villagers had found such a site very inconvenient. They were encouraged to change the site by the fact that in the street there grew an *arjun* tree, one of the sacred trees of Hinduism, and they felt they should do something to signalize its presence in the village. On a cleared space at the base of the tree there were two miniature wooden seats which were used by the spirits when they came, and there were also a clay horse and an elephant which had been in position there since the establishment of the shrine. The duty of tending these shrines, of sweeping the floor and plastering it with cowdung, falls upon an unmarried girl from the headman's house. The headman officiates as the priest at this shrine, presenting the offerings to his ancestors as the representative not only of the family but also of the living members of the village community. Offerings are made during the *Mokor*, the festival that closes the month of *Pus* in mid-January, and also during the Spring and Harvest festival seasons. Animals are sacrificed, but there is a significant difference in the methods of killing the animals offered in the sacred grove to the tribal spirits and those offered to the spirits of the ancestors. In the case of the former the animal is beheaded, but in the latter the animal is struck by a heavy implement on the back of the head so that the blood is not poured out. It does not seem possible to obtain any explanation of this from a Santal, apart from the all-embracing statement that "it is the custom". There is here another indication of the complexity of Santal religion; it would be difficult to fit all the facts into a scheme that seeks to find the origin of sacrifice in a single or simple cause.

The spirit world is not only the concern of the whole community or of each village but also of each family, a fact that finds embodiment in the cult surrounding the third sacred place of the Santals. This is a sacred enclosure inside each dwelling-house known as the *bhitar*, an Indo-Aryan word that means "within". This is formed by constructing a wall across the breadth of the main dwelling-house and so dividing the interior into two rooms with a mud partition between. The *bhitar* is the smaller of the two. The wall may be carried as high as the average height of a man, but often it is only about four feet high. The opening through which members of the family may pass from one room to the other is left vacant without a door. There are no sacred emblems kept in the *bhitar*,

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and in fact it is used extensively as a storeroom, particularly for stacking the bundles of reserve rice. Any man may pass through this opening, but no woman may do so unless she belongs to the family living there. The daughters of the house are debarred from going into the *bhitar* after they have married. After marriage a woman belongs to her husband's family, and this prohibition is one of several that are enforced with a view to ensuring that she shall not bring calamity on her husband's house by continuing to have dealings with the spirits of her father's home. She has to remove herself from their influence. Within the *bhitar* dwells the house spirit, and it is also visited by the ancestors of the family. There offerings of food and beer are made to the immediate ancestors. In certain instances sub-clan sacrifices are made in this inner room. The names of the spirits to whom the sub-clan sacrifices are made are kept secret. The knowledge of these names is handed down within each family from the father to the eldest son or other heir, and under no circumstances should it be imparted to others. An instance was reported of a man who was in deep distress because his father had died without his having had an opportunity of learning the name of the *abge*, as this spirit is called. He hoped to learn the name from one of his father's brothers, but this person also died before he could pass on the information. Shortly afterwards his dead uncle appeared to him in a dream and revealed the name, and he confirmed the correctness of the information by visiting yet another uncle who knew the secret. This story shows that the rules of silence are not too strictly observed within the family circle. Women are not allowed to learn the name, and in most cases they are excluded from participating in the sacrificial meal. The same prohibition applies to sons-in-law, though one of the Soren sub-clans is allowed to leave a portion of the food from the meal for their sons-in-law. When they summon them to eat, however, they address them as they would the household dogs, which emphasizes their separation from the family and from the sub-clan.

Some features of the Santal cult, as well as an indication of the ways in which it may develop, can be illustrated by a description of the shrine that stands on the outskirts of the village of Sarenga. This village was at first a Santal settlement, but it is now a place of nearly two thousand inhabitants, most of whom are Bengali Hindus. The present-day Santal inhabitants number barely one hundred, but amongst them are some who claim descent from the founders of the village, who lived, so they say, nine generations ago.

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the *Sakrat*. At this time offerings are made to the ancestors in each house, and the celebration is accompanied by a display of stick dancing, which has replaced the former "sword and shield" dance. At the end of the following month the *Mag Sim*, the hen at the end of the month of *Mag*, is offered. In former times the village officials used to resign at this time and could be either replaced or reappointed, but the only relic of the old practice that has survived is that the headman has to treat the whole village to beer. Contracts with servants are renewed during the festival, and they receive the cloth that is always a part of the contract. In connection with rice cultivation there is the *Erok' Sim*, the hen that is offered at the time of sowing, and *Nawai*, when the first fruits of the first rice crop are offered in the sacred grove. Before this takes place the new rice must not be eaten. The village priest cuts the first handful of the crop and offers some at the foot of each of the chief trees. A sprig is also tied round the trunk of the trees and remains there. While the prayer is being said, milk is poured on the offering. After the priest has done his part, similar offerings are made in every house to the house spirits and the ancestors, the rice being taken from the crops belonging to the family. In varying degrees the Santals share in some of the festivals and practices of the low-caste cultivators around them. In the early monsoon days, during the period of *Rohini*, which is an auspicious time for sowing rice, they make a mark round their houses with cowdung as a protection against snakes. The snake goddess festival occurs in late August, and although its observance is not widespread among the Santals there are some local celebrations, especially when there is an *ojha* in the village. The *ojhas* all keep this festival, and others go to them at this time to ask for medicines against snakebite. Some Hindu festivals, as we have seen, furnish the occasion for large gatherings of Santals. At Sarenga, in addition to the Lakshmi Puja, a somewhat smaller gathering takes place during the hot weather in connection with the celebration of the Siva Gajon at a local temple. At this time the Charak, or hook-swinging festival, otherwise known as the *Pata*, takes place. The practice has almost died out within the last fifteen years. It had been prohibited by the government, but as long as the old generation, which was accustomed to the practice, remained it continued with gradually diminishing fervour. The Santals gather now to sing and to dance. They also join the throngs of pilgrims, sightseers and traders who collect at the Bogri *mela*, or fair,

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addition to the bride price, to receive a cloth for the bride's mother, one for her father's eldest sister and one each for her two grandmothers.

Some agreement must also be reached about the time of the marriage. This must not take place in the month in which either the bridegroom or bride was born. Formerly, I was told, there was no other prohibition regarding the month. Nowadays, however, the general practice of Hindus in Northern India is followed. Astrologers are not consulted, but marriages may not take place during the rains, and the most popular months are during the spring when the harvest has been gathered in and food is abundant. When the time is approaching, the actual date of the wedding is arranged by the go-between, and the *giṇ* is used to mark off the days remaining.

The whole community in both villages is vitally concerned in the due celebration of the wedding, and this fact is emphasized by the role of the village officials. The *jogmaṇjhi* of the bride's village acts as the master of ceremonies from the time when the marriage booths have to be erected until the end. The headman of the bridegroom's village does not take part in the preliminary visits by virtue of his office, but when the two families immediately involved are satisfied that they wish to proceed, both headmen are called in. They have to be present when the engagement is confirmed, and they are consulted about suitable dates. The final "contract" at the climax of the wedding celebrations is entered into by the people of the two villages, and it is made by the respective headmen. The village priest also plays a part, for the community involved in the marriage includes the spirits, who are guardians of the welfare of the tribe, and the ancestors, guardians of family and clan. Their blessing has to be sought. In an interesting passage Dr. Verrier Elwin says of the marriage ceremonial of the tribes of the Maikal hills: "There is little religion in it." On any definition of religion it would be difficult to maintain this thesis with regard to Santal marriage. The whole passage is quoted here, for the rest of what is said does apply in most of its detail to the Santal form of marriage: "We have already spoken of this ceremony as a work of art. There is little religion in it, but it has great social and symbolic value. It is hard to conceive of a better way of impressing on a man and woman their social and sexual union. The tying together of the clothes, the exchange of rings, the first meals together, the ceremonies by the river that symbolize mutual aid in domestic, sexual and food-obtaining activities, are of great significance.

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765 787 which grains of rice are placed. These grains are both whole and broken and separate out when they are shaken up. The possessed youths utter the guttural-sounding grunts which are typical of persons in their condition, shake their heads from one side to another and jerk the winnowing fans up and down. When the spirits are fully in control they are addressed by one of the relatives. He calls on the name of the deceased and says: "Now, *Gôsâi*, we have given you this rice, speak well to us. Tell us, how did you die and how did you fall? Did you leave us at your own wish, or was it through some disease or through someone's enmity?" On the answer to this question will depend in most cases the subsequent proceedings of the mourners. Questions are asked until the mourners are satisfied that there is no more information to be gained. The spirit of the dead man is cautious in making accusations, and imputations of witchcraft or spirit activity in causing death are usually couched in general terms, for his relations will have recourse to the *ojha* and the *jan* for confirmation if they deem it necessary to do so. At the end of the conversation the spirits go from one to another of the assembled company, and addressing them by name they ask for a drink of water. In return they are supplied with beer to drink, after which they return to normal consciousness. Next, the animal for 765 769 782 the feast is offered to the spirit of the departed. A sacrificial square is marked out with flour in the courtyard and in it the animal is fed on sun-dried rice. Vermilion is applied to it in the usual manner of sacrifices, but the animal is slain with a blow on the back of its head. This animal is provided by the bereaved household, but in addition each of the houses in the village provides a hen to contribute to the feast. The invocation with the offering is as follows: "Take this, *Gôsâi*; we are giving this to you in order that you may be freed from *Jom Raj Haḍur Raj*,[1] from the house of the *Suṇḍi* and the *Haḍi*." The *Haḍi* are the Hari caste, outcasts who tend the cremation grounds of the Hindus, and it may be that the *Suṇḍi*, who are now the sellers of drugs and liquor, have also been associated with the disposal of 765 264 the dead. When all the food is ready for the feast it is divided into three portions. One of these is for the people of the village, one for the bereaved household and one for their relatives, who have gathered whether they belong to the same village or have come from a distance for the occasion. As the food is being served to each person, the server tells him: "This piece is from the wing" or "This piece is from the leg"; all the meat is cut into small

[1] *Haḍur Raj*, another name for the king of the underworld.

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765 within which three vermilion spots are made. The one who floats away the bones should be the one who placed fire to the mouth of the corpse at the burning. He changes his clothes and walks forward until he is quite covered by deep water. He then faces towards the east and releases the bones into the current together with the blood-besprinkled grains of rice. When he comes out of the water a further offering is made of earth from the river bank. This is placed on leaves and floated away with an invocation to the ancestors asking them to receive the spirit of the dead person. This done, the members of the party take a meal by the river bank, eating flattened rice and cakes that they have brought with them. They leave some of the food for the attendants and set out on their homeward way.

Babulal gave an account of the return of the Barikul party on August 18, 1939. He records that it was a hot day and the maize in the homestead fields was fast ripening. "Very early today those who had gone to the river returned to the village. We could hear them cry out '*Horibol, Horibol*'. When they arrived, the *mañjhi* and the *godet*' called everyone together and we washed the feet of the travellers. One person from each house [731] went to wash their feet, and in return they received a gift of sweetmeats from a parcel that the travellers had brought home with them. When the washing was finished each one went to his own house to drink beer, and then the mothers asked their sons: 'O my boy, at which place did you float away your father?' They replied saying: 'At the *Tel kupi* and *Tirio ghats*.' So all the people asked for news of their dead kinsfolk and took a meal, and then in the afternoon they went about their work." *Ghat* is the Bengali word for a landing place on the side of a river, and Babulal names in his account two of the places to which the Santals of the area go. *Tel kupi* is a small earthenware pot used for carrying oil, and *tirio* we have met before, as it means a flute, but I have not obtained any explanation of the names. The former name is a hybrid expression, for *tel* is a Bengali word, while *kupi* is Santali; the ordinary Santali word for oil is *sunum*.

765 The final feast takes place after the return from the river. It is known as *bhaṇḍan* and is in accordance with the means of the family concerned. When the guests have come together, three of the young men are possessed by the spirits of the dead person, the founder of the village and *Marañ Buru* respectively. On this occasion the spirits are asked if they are satisfied with all that has been done, and they are expected to give their assent. The [769] [782] animal set aside for the *bhaṇḍan* is offered to the spirit of the

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dead person, and when it is slain the side on which the animal falls is retained by the giver, while the upturned side is retained by the villagers. The expression used for the side on which the animal falls is *gur lotom*, and this term is also used for any animal that has been reserved for a forthcoming festival and then could not be used because of a death in the family during the interval. When the feast has been prepared, the guests are called to sit down by the host, who calls out three times: "Come along, all. It is time for the *bhat* and *bostom* to eat the rice." *Bhat* and *bostom* are the names of two beggar castes.[1] After all have eaten, a conversation takes place between the villagers on the following lines. A spokesman of the villagers speaks to the assembled company: "In virgin soil and uncut forest, O fathers, such and such a headman cut the trees and made a level plain where he put up huts to dwell in, O fathers. Things went well with them, O fathers, their numbers increased, they gathered together like a flock of doves, O fathers. Now in this house there has been a death and the people in it have been cleansed from defilement, O fathers." Next he addresses the headman: "O father headman, allow us to go to our homes, for all things have been completed." The headman replies: "Fathers, you may go. Go to Sikar[2] and bring from there Moolon the washerman and Kisto the barber." The villagers ask the headman: "And what will they get from us?" To which he replies: "They ought to get from you a basket of rice and an uncastrated goat." Then the villagers ask to be excused: "O father, Sikar is a long way off and who is able to go? Let us be our own washerman and our own barber. Let it be said that from today all the work is finished for this world and the next." When they have been excused, those who carried the corpse to the burning ground have their say: "O fathers, O five, we gave and burnt some wood", whereupon they are given small pieces of burnt wood in exchange. Similarly, they speak of the spade which was used, in return for which they receive some meat. They tell how their eyebrows were singed in the fire and for this receive some beer in a new pot. They take these things away from the house to consume later.

So end the death ceremonies. Most of the living are thereby freed from their obligations to the dead one and also from the dangers to which this period in their lives has exposed them. As far as they could, the rites have ensured the future happiness of

[1] *Bostom* is a form of *Vaishnava*. Cf. reference in the *Karam* festival myth in Chapter 9, p. 118.

[2] A country in which the ancestors once dwelt, according to tradition.

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765 •769 the departed spirit who has now taken his place with the ancestors. His son remains under an obligation to name him at the time of the family sacrifices, and his widow owes to him and to herself certain marks of her widowhood. She wears no flowers or vermilion in her hair and she leaves off the iron bangle given her in marriage. Now, however, the family is free to resume normal relations with the world of men and of spirits, for once again they can marry and give in marriage.

761 Death is essentially an interruption of the normal processes of living. In the conditions under which the Santals live it is often sudden in its onslaught; it descends upon a house unexpectedly and usually as a cruel visitant, for the number of those who live to enjoy a peaceful old age is small. It is never due to accident, for this is a concept beyond the range of Santal philosophy, and the living take pains to discover the cause of every death that occurs, for their own protection. Unless steps are taken to prevent a recurrence it is common belief that at least three deaths will take place in quick succession. But it remains wrapped in [538] mystery. In one of the folk-tales it is told how a woman craved a boon from a holy man: "Give me this boon, to know where the *jivi* goes when we die and by what road does it depart, through the mouth or through the nose, and having departed where does it go? Give me to see what happens. Tell me also when I shall die and when I have died where will my *jivi* go?" Man is com- 775 pounded of two different substances, *horno*, or body, and *jivi*, or 828 soul; these are sometimes separated in dreams, and the final [774] separation in death is a fact that none can deny, but what [539] happens then? Death figures in many sayings that express the sense of the unknown. "In this life", runs one saying, "there is eating and drinking and the wearing of clothes. In the next life who knows what there is?" Some will tell that on death the soul [538] of man enters into a large lizard, the *ghinni*.[1] One story that has a wide currency tells of two men who lay down to rest at the foot of a tree. One of them fell asleep and the other was amazed to see a large lizard coming out of the mouth of his sleeping companion. When the latter awoke he said that in his dream he had been led to a place where treasure lay buried. Yet another common saying expresses scepticism concerning this belief. "Whether after death I shall become a common lizard, *kakra*, or a large lizard, I know not." This saying is used to give expression to the ancient materialist principle of behaviour: "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

[1] Probably *Tiliqua rubriventris*.

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The custom of naming is not directly related to the belief in reincarnation, for the names of grandparents and others are bestowed on children even though they are still alive. As we have seen, the spirits sometimes make their wishes known when they want a particular name to be given. This appears to be due to the fact that one of them feels that he has not been duly honoured rather than that the dead person in question has actually been born again in the person of the child.

The nature of the tie that binds *jivi* and *hormo* together remains obscure. *Jivi* is in a sense identified with the breath which departs from the body at death, but the identification is not complete, for the *jivi* may also leave the body during sleep and unconsciousness. In grammar the Santals distinguish between the animate and the inanimate. Bodding states: "One might be tempted to define the animate as that which has a 'substance' with something living, a living force, inside this, that makes it capable of acting and moving; a combination of 'matter' and a spirit or spirit force is demanded."[1] This cautious and tentative statement by the greatest authority on the Santali language illustrates the difficulty encountered when we try to reduce Santal belief to a system. When the word *jivi* is used alone with a predicate it is constructed as inanimate; on the other hand, anything possessed of *jivi* is regarded as animate.

Ancestor worship serves to keep the memory of the dead alive and welds the community of the living into one with those who have lived in the past. The dead go on a journey; but although they join the ancestors they are not far away, and their welfare is bound up with that of the tribe even as the welfare of the tribe is bound up with theirs. At the end of life people look forward to reunion with their loved ones. I well remember an old woman who was sunning herself one cold morning outside her house. I was passing through the village and stood to talk with her for a few moments. "Where is your husband?" I asked. "He is gone", she replied, indicating the sky; then she added: "I shall soon join him. He is building a house for the two of us, and when it is ready he will call me." Had she, I wondered, had a dream in which her dead husband had appeared to her? I did not ask and I have never learnt.

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Materials for a Santali Grammar*, Pt. II, p. 49.

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[The Santal Christian Community]

enjoined by custom. Food taboos and those relating to dress and ornament are respected and the rules governing clan exogamy are accepted without question. The reason underlying these facts is probably that even when the myth has been discredited the code of behaviour is charged with emotions that continue to enforce it as long as the village environment has been little affected.

In their attitude to the ancestor cult many of the Christians have evolved a compromise. Some families known to me started their Christian life on the basis of a bargain with the spirits. In one village in particular where there are now eight Christian households in a community of twenty-eight families, at least three of the original families to be converted left one of the brothers outside the Church. The unbaptized members of these families were charged with the responsibility of maintaining the fellowship of the family with their ancestors. As one of those concerned said: "If the offerings had not been continued, then the ancestors might have shown their displeasure at all the children becoming Christian." Others who have become Christians continue to make offerings. In no case have I ever been able to discover evidence that Christians make any animal offerings, but during the festival which takes place at the end of the month of *Pus* many Christians make the cakes that are traditionally associated with the festival and make offerings of them to their immediate forbears. The family, represented by the living and the dead, continues to be a focus of powerful sentiments, and the Christians are evidently aware of a void in the teaching that they have received in regard to it.

The identification of *Marak Buru* with Satan incidentally provides a mythological foundation for propaganda in favour of total abstinence, for it was he who taught the first parents to brew beer. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which such propaganda has had the desired effect among the Christian community. Some of its members are known and respected as total abstainers, a fact that illustrates the introduction of a changed standard of values. On the other hand, the majority of village Christians certainly drink beer. The attitude of the community towards the older people who indulge is tolerant, and the habit is explained largely by the fact that the provision of beer is important in showing hospitality towards visitors. Drunkenness, however, is not condoned and it is certainly no longer a form of communal rejoicing. Drinking to excess, where it occurs, has become a private habit surrounded with secrecy.